

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Original) A system for distributing advertisements to a multiplicity of client devices each of which is configured for communications via a communications network, the system comprising:

an advertisement distribution facility that communicates with each of the client devices over the communications network;

wherein each of the client devices downloads advertisements from the advertisement distribution facility, and displays at least selected ones of the downloaded advertisements; and

wherein the advertisement distribution facility includes an auditing function that transmits a send audit data request to a subset of the client devices at prescribed client audit intervals; and

wherein the send audit data request includes a request that the receiving client device transmit ad-related statistical data to the advertisement distribution facility.

2. (Original) The system as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the ad-related statistical data includes display event-related data regarding advertisements that were displayed by that client device during the prescribed audit interval.

3. (Original) The system as set forth in Claim 1, wherein each of the client devices includes an audit data response function that, in response to receipt of the send audit data request:

requests the permission of the user of that client device to transmit the ad-related statistical data to the advertisement distribution facility; and

transmits the ad-related statistical data only in response to the user's permission to do so.

4. (Original) The system as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the auditing function transmits the send audit data request to the subset of the client devices at the prescribed client audit intervals in accordance with a client auditing policy under which send audit data requests are transmitted to a statistical sampling of a population of client devices, at the prescribed client audit intervals.

5. (Original) The system as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the auditing function transmits the send audit data request to the subset of the client devices at the prescribed client audit intervals in accordance with a client auditing policy under which send audit data requests are transmitted to random ones of a population of the client devices, at the prescribed client audit intervals.

6. (Original) The system as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the ad-related statistical data for each client device facilitates analysis of the effectiveness of the system regarding presentation of advertisements to the user of that client device.

7. (Original) The system as set forth in Claim 2, wherein the display event-related data for each client device includes display time data for advertisements that were displayed during the prescribed audit interval by that client device.

8. (Original) The system as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the ad-related statistical data for each client device further includes clickthrough data regarding each advertisement that was clicked on by the user of that client device during the prescribed audit interval.

9. (Original) The system as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the ad-related statistical data for each client device is maintained as a log that is rotated at prescribed rollover intervals.

10. (Original) The system as set forth in Claim 9, wherein the prescribed rollover intervals correspond to the prescribed audit intervals.

11. (Original) The system as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the advertisement distribution facility includes at least one ad server that stores the advertisements to be downloaded by the client devices.

12. (Original) The system as set forth in Claim 11, wherein the at least one ad server comprises a plurality of ad servers.

13. (Original) The system as set forth in Claim 12, wherein at least one of the ad servers is managed by a producer of software installed on each of the client devices.

14. (Original) The system as set forth in Claim 12, wherein at least one of the ad servers is managed by a vendor of software installed on each of the client devices.

15. (Original) The system as set forth in Claim 12, wherein at least one of the ad servers is managed by an entity other than a producer of software installed on each of the client devices.

16. (Original) The system as set forth in Claim 12, wherein at least one of the ad servers is managed by an entity other than a vendor of software installed on each of the client devices.

17. (Original) The system as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the advertisement distribution facility includes:

at least one ad server that stores the advertisements to be distributed to the client devices, each advertisement being stored in a storage location designated by a source address;

at least one playlist server that receives a playlist request from each of the client devices, and that transmits a playlist response in response to each received playlist request; and

wherein the playlist response transmitted to each client device includes at least one playlist that identifies advertisements to be downloaded by that client device.

18. (Original) The system as set forth in Claim 1, wherein:

the advertisement distribution facility includes:

at least one ad server that stores the advertisements to be distributed to the client devices, each advertisement being stored in a storage location designated by a source address;

at least one playlist server that provides at least one playlist for each client device; and

the at least one playlist provided for each client device identifies advertisements to be downloaded by that client device.

19. (Original) The system as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the communications network comprises the Internet.

20. (Original) The system as set forth in Claim 1, wherein each of the client devices is equipped with software that effects communications with both the system for distributing advertisements and with a data communications service provider.

21. (Original) The system as set forth in Claim 20, wherein the software is subsidized by revenues attributable to the downloaded advertisements.

22. (Original) The system as set forth in Claim 20, wherein the data communications service provider comprises an e-mail service provider.

23. (Original) The system as set forth in Claim 22, wherein the data communications service provider comprises an Internet service provider.

24. (Original) The system as set forth in Claim 20, wherein the software is e-mail software.

25. (Original) The system as set forth in Claim 24, wherein the e-mail software is subsidized by revenues attributable to the downloaded advertisements.

26. (Original) The system as set forth in Claim 20, wherein the data communications service provider comprises an e-mail service provider.

27. (Original) The system as set forth in Claim 20, wherein the data communications service provider comprises an Internet service provider.

28. (Original) The system as set forth in Claim 20, wherein the advertisement distribution system is operated by a producer of the software.

29. (Original) The system as set forth in Claim 20, wherein the advertisement distribution system is operated by a vendor of the software.

30. (Original) The system as set forth in Claim 28, wherein the software is e-mail software.

31. (Original) The system as set forth in Claim 29, wherein the software is e-mail software.

32-113. (Canceled, without prejudice)